

TENNESSEE PARTNERS PROJECT

April 23, 2003

The Tennessee Partners Project is a private lands program designed to establish or improve waterfowl and wetland habitat. The program began in 1993, and is a cooperative effort between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), Ducks Unlimited (DU), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA), University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (UTAES), and the landowner. Under the program, landowners are provided water control structures and technical assistance for the design and installation of waterfowl impoundments. The TDA and DU also may provide some cost-share assistance toward the construction of the project. In return, landowners sign a minimum ten-year agreement to flood croplands and other designated areas from October 1 or immediately after crops are harvested until March 1 each year, and limit waterfowl hunting to mornings only. At the end of the agreement period, the landowner retains ownership of all water control structures. The cooperating agencies expect the practice of holding water during the winter months to continue after the contract period ends primarily due to the anticipated benefits.

Benefits to landowners from the flooding of crop fields may include:

- Inhibited weed growth.
- Increased soil moisture at crop planting.
- Personal recreational opportunities.
- Financial return from duck hunting leases.

Benefits to the environment may include:

- Sediment trapping and reduced sedimentation to water courses.
- Water quality improvements due to reduced pesticide applications.
- Increased waterfowl and shallow water habitat for wildlife.
- Reduced disease potential from dispersal of waterfowl.

As of June 30, 2002, approximately 7,000 acres of shallow water have been developed under Tennessee Partners Project agreements, primarily in West Tennessee. This habitat has benefited waterfowl, wading and shore birds, and other wildlife associated with aquatic habitats. Technical assistance has also been provided on approximately 22,700 additional acres.

Progress is reported on the basis of state government's fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the next year. For the period July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002, there were a total of 8 projects resulting in a total of 290 acres of habitat created. An additional 2,800 acres were enrolled in the program, with project installation work pending for 18 landowners.

The average impoundment size created in fiscal year 2002 was 36 acres. Habitat gains are reported in Duck Use Days (DUD). For this reporting period, there was an approximate total of 169,680 DUD's of habitat developed.

TENNESSEE PARTNERS PROJECT

April 23, 2003

The following list provides a program summary from 1993 until June 30, 2002, for the Tennessee Partners Project:

➤ Approximate Number of Acres Restored/Enhanced	7,000
➤ Number of Landowners Enrolled	141
➤ Approximate Number of Shallow Water Areas	130
➤ Average Size in Acres per Shallow Water Area	54
➤ Approximate Number of Water Control Structures Installed	165
➤ Percentage of Enrolled Land in Crops	85

Additional information on the Tennessee Partners Project can be obtained from NRCS area and field offices. A directory of locations and personnel in Tennessee is available elsewhere on this web site. Information can also be obtained from the Tennessee Partners Project Biologist with Ducks Unlimited.

The Tennessee Partners Project brochure can be downloaded from the NRCS Tennessee web site.